

6311 Wilson Lane
Bethesda, MD 20817
February 18, 1999

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Commissioner Jane E. Henney M.D.
FDA (HFE)
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Commissioner Henney:

I understand that the Food and Drug Administration, (FDA), has recently passed a law that allows foods, including meats, to be irradiated. Irradiation has its benefits, but I still strongly support the argument that foods should not be allowed to be irradiated. In the following paragraphs I will try to convince, persuade, and change your mind about the law that foods should not be irradiated.

My first reason is that irradiation destroys vitamins. This argument comes from a magazine called Popular Science and it states that irradiation has its benefits. One of those good points, that many people stress, is that irradiation kills little organisms and diseases that cause food poisoning. That fact is very true, but what most people don't know is that it destroys nutritious vitamins too. Irradiation can eliminate ten percent of vitamins A, B-1, E and K. In fact, I am surprised that irradiation can kill fifty percent of vitamin b-1 in meats when the FDA just passed a law that allows the irradiation meats. The food is safe but is about half as nutritious as it once was.

My next reason is that food can be easily re-contaminated. According to the St. Louis Post Dispatch, during transportation, the food can be open to other organisms that can re-contaminate the food. Therefore, the food can be easily spoiled. Also, because we know that irradiation kills diseases in the food and kills vitamins, if the food is re-contaminated you are left with regular food with half of the vitamins gone. To me, all that is doing is making nutritious food, a lot less nutritious.

My last reason is from a newspaper called Newsday. It says that some people think that their food will get a procedure for irradiation that is unclear and won't be as effective as other procedures and that it is a greater health threat which may kill as many as 9,000 people a year! That is why a lot of grocery store and supermarket owners don't buy irradiated products. If I were to buy irradiated food, I wouldn't eat it unless I knew what happened to it.

I hope you can see that irradiation isn't the best choice for keeping food healthy and these reasons are well supported with details. I hope you change your mind about the law of irradiating foods and you feel confident about keeping foods non- irradiated. Thank you for taking your time to read my letter.

Sincerely,

Pete Reardon-Anderson
Peter Reardon- Anderson

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